

REMARKS

The final Office Action of July 7, 2010, withdraws claims 28-31 from consideration based on a constructive election. Without conceding the merits of this constructive election, Applicants cancel claims 28-31 in this After-Final Amendment in Reply. Additionally, Applicants also cancel previously withdrawn claims 1-12. As such, claims 13-27 are pending, with claims 16-20 currently being withdrawn.

The Office Action indicates that claims 13-16¹ and 21-27 are allowable. Applicants thank the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter. The Office Action also indicates that claims 17-20² are species of independent claim 13 and that they will be fully examined for potential rejoinder if claims 1-12 and 28-31 are canceled. As noted above, claims 1-12 and 28-31 have been canceled in this After-Final Amendment in Reply. As such, Applicants respectfully request rejoinder of withdrawn claims 16-20 as being species of independent claim 13. Applicants further submit that claims 16-20 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 13, as well as for the additional inventive features recited therein.

The Office Action does not raise any other issues (e.g., under 35 U.S.C. §§ 101, 102, 103 or 112). Applicants therefore submit that claims 13-27 are in condition for allowance, and respectfully request that the Examiner issue a notice of allowance for all of the pending claims.

It is believed that all of the pending claims have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, issue or comment does not signify agreement with or concession of that rejection, issue or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this

¹ Although the Examiner stated that claim 16 is allowable, Applicants note that claim 16 had previously been withdrawn.

² The Examiner may have intended to indicate that withdrawn claims 16-20 are species of independent claim 13, instead of just withdrawn claims 17-20. As indicated above, claim 16 is currently withdrawn and was indicated in the Election/Restriction Requirement of June 23, 2006, as being a species of generic claim 13.

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Filed : October 28, 2003
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paper, and the amendment of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment.

No fee is believed to be due with this submission. However, if any fees are due, please apply any charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: September 1, 2010 _____

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